

CLARKE COUNTY

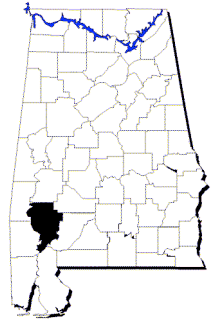
Honorable William E. Kimbrough

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Council Priorities

1. To provide a Family Resource Center to facilitate parent training and support.

Currently there is neither a family resource center or parenting classes/support groups in Clarke County. In 2004, there were 196 complaints filed against juvenile offenders in Clarke County. Families of juvenile offenders often have social emotional and relational problems. The Clarke County Children's Policy Council needs assistance in finding funding sources to establish this service.

2. To provide a therapeutic alternative school program to deter adolescents from crime and substance abuse.

According to a "Voices for Alabama's Children" study, substance abuse increases by 200-600% from 6th grade to 12th grade. Adolescents involved in substance abuse and crime often have social, emotional, and family problems and struggle academically. It is recommended that these adolescents receive more individual attention by having a smaller ratio of staff to students as well as be provided individual, group, and family therapy as part of an alternative school program. Cooperation between Mental Health, Department of Youth Services, and the Clarke County and Thomasville City School systems will be needed in order to initiate such an alternative education program.

3. To enhance the services of Clarke County Regional Child Advocacy Center (CAC).

Clarke County now has a functioning Child Advocacy Center. It has a new location and is staffed with a director, and two part time staff. Funding sources need to be created to continue to offer services to the community and maintain the building. The recommendation has been made that state legislated appropriations be made for funding to CAC's through the Alabama Network of CAC's.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

To provide education and community awareness for children in day care/preschool

Action Steps

- 1) Utilize existing childcare programs.
- 2) Interagency collaboration
- 3) Support early childcare programs as well as promote childcare training.

To promote that all children have access to quality preschool care and education

Action Steps

- 1) Increase resources from birth to age six.
- 2) Increase services in high-risk communities.
- 3) Provide child development information incorporated into k-12 classes for potential teen parents.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

To enable parents on welfare to secure and maintain employment

Action Steps

- 1) Work with ATRC to provide transportation for children to daycare.
- 2) Work with County Commissioners and ATRC in creating a transportation committee to expand transportation services in rural areas.
- 3) Locate more prep placement resources for DHR's JOB clients.

Clarke County to focus on community and industrial development

Action Steps

- 1) Focus on needs of children in community development especially quality of life issues.
- 2) Ensure several Children's Policy Council members are on the board of Clarke County Development Foundation.

Prepare youth for the job market

Action Steps

- 1) Develop summer job program for Clarke County.
- 2) Encourage job readiness classes to become part of school curriculum.
- 3) Develop program to provide money for transportation, uniforms, clothing, lunches for youth on summer job programs when needed.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

To provide a therapeutic alternative school program to deter adolescents from crime and substance abuse

Action Steps

- 1) To investigate the feasibility of opening a therapeutic alternative school in Clarke County.
- 2) To investigate the Compass School in Escambia County as a possible model for a therapeutic alternative school.

To develop a program offering alternative to college for 11th and 12th graders

Action Steps

- 1) To offer a career day focusing on vocational, technical, and military training.
- 2) To rotate this training annually among high school hosts.
- 3) To offer a program to improve testing skills.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

To target children ages birth to 19 years who are at risk for physical health deficits

Action Steps

- 1) To provide education to promote healthy eating habits thereby reducing the incidence of eating disorders such as anorexia and obesity.

To target children ages birth to 19 who are at-risk for behavioral crisis

Action Steps

- 1) To employ licensed social workers/nurse case managers to provide case management services to grades K-12.
- 2) To provide parenting seminars for families of at-risk children ages 3-19 years.

To target children ages 18 and under who are engaged in sexual behaviors

Action Steps

- 1) To provide ongoing abstinence-based education through community entities.
- 2) To offer alternative methods for the prevention of pregnancy and STD transmission.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

To provide a family resource center to facilitate parent training and support

Action Steps

- 1) Investigate need for parent training and support for families of juvenile delinquents.
- 2) To investigate Hope Place in Escambia County and Rainbow House in Conecuh County as possible models for this program.
- 3) To investigate the "Parent Project" and "Journey to Freedom" as possible programs for juvenile delinquents and their parents.

To provide substance abuse treatment for adults in Clarke County to reduce incidences of child abuse and neglect

Action Steps

- 1) To assess the need for substance abuse treatment in Clarke County.
- 2) Investigate possible funding for substance abuse intensive outpatient program in Clarke County.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

To enhance the services of Clarke County Regional Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)

Action Steps

- 1) Support state legislated appropriations for Alabama Network of CAC's.
- 2) To familiarize the council and community of CAC services and create a local and grant funding resources.

Make expert child abuse medical exams available to children from rural Clarke County, Alabama

Action Steps

- 1) Support the development of telemedicine in Clarke County.
- 2) Educate the council and community on the benefits of evidence collection through telemedicine.
- 3) Help locate resources of funding for telemedicine within the county and through grants.

Make children safer in motor vehicles

Action Steps

- 1) Encourage laws officials to enforce child restraint laws.
- 2) Develop heightened community awareness of dangers of leaving children alone in motor vehicles.
- 3) Inform communities to report to DHR and/or law enforcement incidents of children in unsafe situations regarding motor vehicles such as lack of restraints, left in the car, riding with impaired driver, etc.

Policy Recommendations

- Continue Medicaid funding for case managers through Patient First Care Coordination system.
- To cultivate funding for alternative/therapeutic education programs.
- Encourage law enforcement officials to enforce child restraint laws and provide heavier penalties for adults who fail to comply with these laws.
- Provide a funding source for intensive outpatient services for adults with substance abuse issues as a means of preventing child abuse and neglect.
- Secure local resources to establish a family resource center.